

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 00416 111424Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SY-05
MCT-01 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 OMB-01 CU-02 /075 W
-----111431Z 005145 /47

R 111235Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0416

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT UR
SUBJECT: MOSCOW METRO EXPLOSION

REF: LONDON 399 (NOTAL)

1. THERE ARE SEVERAL PUZZLING FEATURES TO THE JANUARY 8 METRO EXPLOSION. THERE SEEMS NO DOUBT THAT AN EXPLOSION OF SOME SORT TOOK PLACE INSIDE A CAR WHILE A METRO TRAIN WAS BETWEEN TWO STATIONS. IT ALSO SEEMS CLEAR THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL DEATHS AND A GOOD MANY INJURIES. HOWEVER, DESPITE THE LOUIS PIECE, THERE IS NO CONSENSUS AMONG THE WESTERN CORRESPONDENTS HERE THAT THE EXPLOSION RESULTED FROM A BOMB. WESTERN JOURNALISTS NOTE THAT THE FIRST THEY HEARD ABOUT THE EXPLOSION CAME FROM A TASS RUSSIAN SERVICE ANNOUNCING THE EXPLOSION. JOURNALISTS WHO HAVE TAKEN THE SUBWAY OUT TO THE PLACE WHERE THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE ARE UNABLE TO OBSERVE ANY CLEAR EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE TO THE TUNNEL OR INSTALLATIONS INSIDE IT. SIMILARLY, THEIR ATTEMPTS TO INTERVIEW WITNESSES HAVE TURNED UP NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE BOMB THEORY.

2. IF THE ACCIDENT WAS A NATURAL ONE, IT MAY WELL BE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 00416 111424Z

THAT THE AUTHORITIES DECIDED TO ANNOUNCE IT BECAUSE THEY ASSUMED THAT IT WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME KNOWN IN THE WEST AND IT WOULD BE BETTER TO PREEMPT THE JOURNALISTS. THE FACT THAT IT OCCURED IN MOSCOW WOULD MAKE IT PARTICULARLY HARD TO KEEP SECRET. THE LAST MAJOR TRANSPORT ACCIDENT THAT THE SOVIET PRESS REPORTED WAS THE CRASH OF AN AIRLINER IN NOVEMBER 1976 (76 MOSCOW 18839), AND THE ANNOUNCEMENT

IN THE SOVIET PRESS CAME ONLY AFTER STORIES HAD APPEARED
IN THE WESTERN MEDIA. LIKE THE METRO EXPLOSION, THIS
ACCIDENT OCCURRED IN MOSCOW.

3. WHILE THE EXPLOSION MAY HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY A BOMB,
WE OBSERVE THAT SUCH TERRORIST ACTS ARE EXTREMELY RARE IN
THE USSR. THERE WAS AN ATTEMPT TO BLOW UP LENIN'S TOMB
IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 1973, AND REPORTEDLY THERE WAS AN
EXPLOSION INSIDE THE MAUSOLEUM ITSELF IN 1967 OR 1968.
THERE HAVE OF COURSE ALSO BEEN THE SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS
AND OTHER TERRORISTS ACTS IN GEORGIA IN THE LAST TWO YEARS
(76 MOSCOW A-279, 76 MOSCOW 10141), BUT IN GENERAL
ORGANIZED TERRORISM IS VERY UNUSUAL, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE,
IN THIS COUNTRY.

4. WHATEVER THE CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT, THE LOUIS PIECE
MAY BE AN ATTEMPT TO GET SOME POSITIVE PROPAGANDA MILEAGE
IN THE WEST OUT OF THIS INCIDENT. CERTAINLY LOUIS MAKES
A FAIRLY OBVIOUS ATTACK BOTH ON THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
PORTION OF THE CSCE FINAL ACT AND ON SOVIET DISSIDENCE.
THE FACT THAT LOUIS DOES NOT NAME ANY SPECIFIC GROUP
MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO RETURN TO THE CHARGE, SHOULD A
SUITABLE CANDIDATE TURN UP.

5. AS TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE LOUIS STORY, EXCEPT FOR THE GEORGIANS,
SOVIET DISSIDENTS ARE REMARKABLE FOR THEIR NON-VIOLENT APPROACH.
SUCH AN ACT AS PLANTING A BOMB WOULD BE MORALLY
REPUGNANT TO THE SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENT. ALTHOUGH
SOVIET JEWS HAVE CONTEMPLATED USING VIOLENCE IN THE PAST
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 00416 111424Z

(E.G.
THE LENINGRAD HI-JACKING AFFAIR), THAT WAS AIMED
AT GETTING THE PERPETRATORS OUT, AND NOT AT FOCUSING
PUBLICITY ON THE PLIGHT OF THE JEWS.
TOON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUBWAYS, EXPLOSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 11-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977MOSCOW00416
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770010-0436
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770163/aaaacdck.tel
Line Count: 102
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3e172fdb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 LONDON 399
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3625937
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MOSCOW METRO EXPLOSION
TAGS: PINS, PINT, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3e172fdb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009